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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

30 March 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director (Programmed Intelligence)
Defense Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT : Editorial Problems with NIS Contributions
Produced by DIA

1. The attachment provides samples of the kinds of editorial problems referred to in the internal OBGI memo, "Comments on DIA's Participation in the NIS Program", which I passed to you informally in January. This sampling has been compiled in response to a request from Mr. [REDACTED] the DIA Member of the NIS Committee. None of the types of problems listed in the attachment is new to the NIS, and none is peculiar to any one contributing agency.

2. The original manuscripts turned in by NIS contributors are routinely destroyed 30 days after publication. Consequently, we are not in a position to provide an extensive list of the kind of direct and specific illustrations which [REDACTED] requested. However, I believe the samples attached give some feel for the problems as we see them. These samples were derived for the most part from dossier memos (brief, for-the-record accounts of editing and processing highlights which are prepared routinely by the responsible editor as each NIS section is completed). Other sources include available worknotes, manuscripts now in process, and recollections of editors. The dossier memos are designed primarily for in-house reference; consequently, they tend to be cryptic, but I have decided against tampering with their original language. We have divided the problems into seven categories for convenience in presentation. Where necessary for clarity, brief explanations are added.

3. We have long praised the regularity with which DIA meets its schedule commitments, but this good record may have been achieved in part at the expense of complete, accurate, and carefully reviewed

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contributions. From our viewpoint there seems to have been a diminution of quality control in DIA-produced studies. An increasing number of substantive errors seem to have been passed on to OBGI, and we are not always qualified to handle them. We are aware that budgetary restraints curtailed the centralized NIS review function in DIA several years ago; and we have endeavored to compensate for this during our review in OBGI, although our strength has also been cut. The volume and nature of the more obvious errors and omissions, such as those illustrated by the attachment, creates an uneasy feeling that we may be missing others, some of which may be potentially more serious than those we do detect. Indeed, this feeling was strengthened by our experience with several urban area contributions in which our editors, in the absence of open source material, turned to photo interpretation support by the OBGI Geography Division to substantiate further hunches of error.

4. My goal is to enhance the quality and the broad usefulness of the NIS program during a period when resources available to the program are shrinking throughout the community. I know that you and your DIA colleagues also pursue that goal. I hope that this review helps us all to that end. We are, of course, available for further discussion of the matter.

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JOHN KERRY KING
Director
Basic and Geographic Intelligence

Attachment

Samples of editorial problems

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